



Students for Patient Advocacy Nationwide

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The Honorable Larry W. Potts, Chair,
North Carolina House Health Committee
North Carolina General Assembly
16 West Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27601

Position Letter: HB 46 – Disclosure of the financial cost of state-imposed health insurance requirements on North Carolina employers and taxpayers

Dear Chairman Potts and the members of the North Carolina House Health Committee,

We at Students for Patient Advocacy Nationwide (SPAN) are writing to display our conditional support for HB 46, which aims to improve accountability and transparency in healthcare by requiring public disclosure of the financial implications of state-imposed health benefit mandates.

Our organization recognizes the importance of cost transparency and the need for clear justification of any legislative action that affects patient access to care. This is a crucial step toward establishing an equitable healthcare system that balances affordability with high-quality coverage for all North Carolinians.

While we support the principles behind HB 46, we respectfully raise the following concerns about its implementation:

- **No required public disclosure of financial analyses:** Currently, HB 46 lacks specific language regarding the disclosure of the financial analysis used to justify the costs of appropriated funds for any new mandates. Stakeholders, including patients, cannot see how these decisions are made or evaluate whether financial assumptions are accurate.
- **Mandated repeal could eliminate essential benefits:** HB 46 requires that for every new mandate proposed, an existing mandate must be repealed. In its current state, legislators may be compelled to repeal essential coverage to meet the repeal requirement, even if the new mandate would improve patient outcomes.
- **No assessment of effects on underserved communities:** The bill evaluates mandates through a financial lens, but there is no requirement to analyze how these changes affect patient access, especially in communities that already face significant barriers to healthcare. Removing mandated benefits could widen the gaps in access and equity.

To address these concerns while preserving the bill's goals, we respectfully recommend the following amendments:



- **Public Financial Impact Reporting:** We recommend that all fiscal analyses of health benefit mandates be published online in a publicly searchable format, written in plain language, and presented prior to any vote being taken. This would protect taxpayers and promote accountability without limiting patient protections.
- **Protecting Essential Benefits:** SPAN recommends that North Carolina prohibit the repeal of essential health benefits defined under federal law, require independent clinical review before eliminating an existing mandate, and ensure that cost considerations do not override patient outcomes.
- **Require Health Equity Impact Evaluations:** SPAN urges the addition of a requirement that specifies every mandate and repeal proposal must include an equity impact statement assessing potential effects on underserved patient populations.

With these amendments, HB 46 would be more effective in achieving its intended goal of making healthcare more affordable for employers, taxpayers, and families.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to support HB 46 with the amendments noted above, which would ensure transparency while safeguarding patient access to care.

Thank you for your attention and continued leadership on behalf of North Carolina patients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Muldowney", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Victoria Muldowney

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Policy Analyst, SPAN